

President's Letter
Allen G. Squire
November, 2008

Change is coming. As I write this before the November 4th election, the buzzword “change” is on everyone’s mind. Even at the United States Animal Health Association meeting in Greensboro, North Carolina, the TB committee topics included changing the way we do business regarding TB.

As I attended the TB committee meetings, I was quite surprised to listen to state veterinarians from Michigan, Texas, California, Minnesota and New Mexico speak almost in unison about our relative inability to eradicate tuberculosis in cattle even when a lot of money was available. The future of the TB program will depend on changes that are made over the next few months that will necessarily use less government money.

At the meeting in Greensboro, Sharon attended as a member of the TB committee and several past and present members of the New Mexico Livestock Board and State Veterinarians office were also there to gain insight into not only dealing with TB but also dealing with the federal government’s new approach to TB. The reality coming out of this set of meetings is that spending many millions of dollars to depopulate herds with a few infected TB cows will be a thing of the past. We will need to change. Biosecurity will need to be taken seriously by all of us in animal agriculture. Testing and slaughter programs may be the only way that TB is handled in the future. USDA-APHIS Veterinary Services is planning a series of “listening sessions” in December to gather input from producers and other affected persons on how to move forward with TB programs given future budget constraints. Local listening sessions are scheduled to be in Albuquerque and Austin, Texas. If you want your comments to be heard, please contact the DPNM office for information on the meetings. We need industry input to help us prepare new plans and approaches to deal with the threat of TB.

Undoubtedly we will also see other areas of government that will need to change to adapt to new realities no matter which presidential candidate is elected.

I sincerely hope that every one of you exercised your right to vote on November 4. If not, don’t complain about the results!

As we enter the holiday season, I think it’s a good time to reflect on what we do have to be thankful for. Let us not forget that we still have the ability to be productive in this country if we want to be. Let us give thanks for all aspects of modern agriculture without

which we as a nation would be dependent on foreign countries for our food supply. We can be thankful for the ability to provide jobs not only for our employees but also for many others in the local community who have jobs associated with the dairy industry.

We need to continue to protect and support our most vital industry. Joe the Plumber and Ed the Dairyman show us that the enterprising spirit is still alive and thriving in America. Above all, let us be thankful for that!